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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	USSR/Austria (Soviet Zone)	REPORT NO.	
SUBJECT	Reluctance of Soviet Soldiers To Be Classified as Radio Operators	DATE DISTR.	8 January 1954
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REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

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COUNTRY USSR/ Austria (Soviet Zone)

DATE DISTR. 10 Dec. 1953

SUBJECT Reluctance of Soviet Soldiers To Be
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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. Until April 1952 almost none of the radio operators [REDACTED] had successfully passed an examination, given each spring and fall, to become a radio operator 3rd, 2nd, or 1st Class. Their failure to pass was not due to inability or lack of experience, but rather to a deliberate attempt to avoid classification as a radio operator. Reluctance to accept this classification was based on rumors and eyewitness reports of what had been the fate of men who had been qualified radio operators during World War II. According to these rumors and reports, many radio operators had been shot by their officers as "enemies of the people" or "spies" for failing to make contact with neighboring units or headquarters. The operators had allegedly been executed even if the inability to make contact had not been their own fault but had been due to malfunctioning of equipment or failure of receiving operators to acknowledge call signals. Since most of us felt that war could break out at any time, we had no desire to be classified as any class of radio operator if it might mean we could meet the same end. [REDACTED] however, many radio operators who were scheduled for demobilization in the autumn 50X1 easily passed the examination with the realization that they would be in the USSR when and if war broke out. Few of the new recruits, however, believed the stories; they tried to the best of their ability to receive radio operator classifications.
2. The stories were numerous of radio operators' having been shot for no fault of their own during World War II. I particularly recall one incident related to me by a Sgt. [REDACTED] At some time during the war, according to this sergeant, a young, inexperienced female radio operator, 3rd Class, was assigned to him as his assistant. One day, after having made contact with headquarters, he left this girl alone and went out for a brief walk. During his absence a somewhat inebriated major approached the girl and asked her to make contact with headquarters. In the meantime, headquarters had changed

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to another wave length and the girl, already frightened by the major's demanding tone, was unable to make the contact. When the sergeant returned he found the girl lying on the ground shot to death by the major. In reply to the sergeant's queries as to what had happened, the major replied that the girl had obviously been working for the Germans and had therefore refused to make the necessary contact with headquarters. When the sergeant protested that the girl was guilty only of inexperience, the major began to accuse him also of working for the Germans and began to draw his pistol, whereupon the sergeant said he had been compelled to shoot the major in self defense.

3. Additional evidence which helped convince us of the fate of radio operators during World War II came from the senior lieutenant who was CO of the radio company of the separate signal battalion of the [redacted] This officer delighted in bragging about his having killed three radio operators during World War II because they were "enemies of the people"; he said they had failed to make a radio contact he had ordered them to make. [redacted]

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[redacted] In a practice exercise, one group of radio operators had assumed the role of headquarters. The senior lieutenant in charge of the group inquired of each operator whether he had made his assigned radio contact. When several of them failed to make contact after a short while, the officer angrily brandished his pistol saying that if it were actually wartime those failing to make the radio contact would have been shot as "enemies of the people".

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